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Prayers for those in Authority.  
Marriage.

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TWO SERMONS

PREACHED IN

THE PARISH CHURCH OF KIDDERMINSTER,

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE REJOICINGS FOR THE MARRIAGE  
OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.

BY

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## Prayers for those in Authority.

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1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

“I EXHORT THEREFORE, THAT, FIRST OF ALL, SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND GIVING OF THANKS, BE MADE FOR ALL MEN; FOR KINGS, AND FOR ALL THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY; THAT WE MAY LEAD A QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY.”

THIS injunction of St. Paul to Timothy concerning what he would have done in the Churches of Ephesus, has served to guide all Churches in the matter to which it refers, public prayers and intercession for all men; and first for kings, or the supreme authority in the State; and this for the sake of the common welfare, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; in godliness, i.e. in all things which pertain to God; in honesty, i.e. in all our dealings with our fellow men. For under a good government blessed of God, men will be preserved, from any outward violence at least, which might hinder them in the regular and faithful discharge of these duties. Certainly quietness and peace are a great help to religion; and to honesty or right-dealing also. It must have struck you all, in the melancholy accounts which reach us continually of a country where war is raging, how under cover of the tumult that prevails, most dishonest and unworthy deeds are done,—unprincipled men hoping to escape unpunished in the general confusion. Oh! let the thought add fervour and earnestness to our



prayers that God would bless us with peace under wise and religious princes, lest we too should run into the same excess of riot, and become the prey of violent and wicked men !

There is indeed a great safeguard against such a calamity in the loyalty of the people towards their Sovereign, never so notably manifested as on the present joyful occasion in which the happiness of her life is bound up ; and in the freedom we enjoy under a constitutional government. But what could either of these sources of tranquillity avail us, without the Divine blessing ? If the loyalty of the people to the Throne be greater now than at any former period of our history, which I believe it to be, is not a large measure of it owing to the worthiness of her whom God hath set over us to be our ruler, — to her whole character as a wife (alas ! a widow) and a mother, no less than to her wise dispensation, her known impartiality and equal justice ? Hath it not therefore, if we examine into its nature, this feature, a strong attachment in the hearts of the people to the person of the Sovereign ? And whence cometh this but of God ; as it is written, — “ The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water : He turneth it whithersoever He will.” And as concerns this sober and rational freedom we enjoy under a constitutional government, what would ensue even here, if the hearts of the people were maddened, as they are in the country to whose unhappy state I have already referred, by strong passions and violent prejudices, arising out of some chance agitation, or smouldering evil which we know not of ? Who is it, again, but God who “ stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people ?” To Him therefore, again, should we betake ourselves



in prayer, for the continuance of this as well as of that other source of our permanent tranquillity. We owe it to none but God. If we adopt the language of the orator Tertullus, when he spake before Felix, "Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness,"—if, I say, we thus ascribe to the beneficent and impartial rule under which we live much of the happiness we enjoy, we so ascribe it under God, as in God's sight, believing that He has granted in answer to our faith and prayers the continuance of our prosperity, that He has blessed both the Queen and all this people.

And therefore, brethren, on the day when the whole nation with one accord is to celebrate with public rejoicing the marriage of the heir to the crown of these kingdoms, it seemed right and fitting that the festivities of the day should begin with the bending of our knees and the uplifting of our hearts to the Giver of all good gifts—with seeking a blessing. And I will say it for the authorities in this place—both now and on every other occasion which I can call to mind—that they have never in any public matter embraced any other than the religious, or God-fearing, view of any question. It does not follow that they have always come as a body to the parish church. It may be that either the chief magistrate himself, or others of the corporation, have not been worshippers here, or, being themselves worshippers, have not thought it good to assemble and ascend up hither for prayer. But in matters concerning religion there has been always a respect accorded to the ministers of religion and the ordinances of the Church, which is a part of the faith of this nation in God; which let us pray

God with one accord ever to keep alive among us by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and of His gracious mercy to hinder the schisms and divisions which unhappily exist among us from impairing or destroying that faith in which, after all, our strength as a nation, our contentedness as a people, doth chiefly consist.

But the subject on which I am most anxious to exhort you, brethren, believing it to be most necessary for the times we live in, is that you should, as a community of Christian persons, put more faith than I fear many of you do, in the prayers and intercessions of the Church.

Now pray do not take offence at the word Church, and say, as some do, that you came to hear of Christ, and not of the Church. For what is the Church but the spouse, the bride of Christ the Bridegroom? the body of which He is the Head? And when we speak of the prayers and intercessions of the Church, we mean nothing else than prayers offered up in that prevailing Name—the prayer of faith, which before now hath healed the sick and raised the dead to life. Have faith in prayers, offered by the body of believers, as you have in your own private prayer offered in secret, when no man sees you; but much more in these, as having special great promises attached to them. Prayers for national mercies especially, should be offered in the public assemblies. And it would grieve me on Tuesday to see the public prayers disregarded, because I should see in that the deadly harm which I fear—the mischief which is eating like a canker into the heart of the nation, even while it retains, as we have said, its strong spirit of loyalty, its value for public liberty, its respect for the old forms in which this loyalty and liberty have been enshrined for many generations. But,

my brethren, shocking as it is to say, this veneration for old forms hath been rudely shaken in regard of religious forms and observances : which as long as man exists, a complex structure of body, soul, and spirit, are as needful to the substance of religion as any State forms are for State polity—and who will say that they are unnecessary? But religion has suffered where the world, which loves its own, hath conserved its own interest. Two evils, division and scepticism, have undermined religion. Division has established it as a maxim—"It does not matter where, or how, or when you worship." Scepticism has added—"It does not matter whether you worship at all." And these maxims entering into worldly and carnal hearts, have wrought mischief which this generation will, I fear, see increase unto more ungodliness. For those hearts act insensibly upon other hearts—upon the hearts of the young for instance—who take up the tone and imbibe the spirit of their elders, on the side of license and liberty.

The eagerness with which a book questioning the authority and veracity of the Holy Scriptures has been bought up and read, is a case in point. Some years ago, in what was certainly a colder and more careless age as concerns religion, such a book would have been received with indifference by the mass, because the age was indifferent to such matters ; but it would have been abhorred and speedily condemned by the godly ; whereas now there is a false and unholy interest excited by it. And there is an inclination, (brethren, no man who knows the working of the human heart can doubt it,)—there is an inclination to credit these objections, and discredit Scripture. The decay of reverence for forms, for acts of religion and worship, has paved the way for reverencing less the Holy Word in which the foundations

of these forms and acts are laid—deeply laid; laid in a careful study, and prayerful meditation on its revealed mysteries: so deeply laid, so entirely resting on that Book, that if its authority and inspiration shall cease to be acknowledged by the people, farewell not only to a national religion, or what men call an establishment, but farewell to any religion which can train the young, or influence masses of men; farewell to every religion of a public, or, as we say, catholic character; farewell to all religion, save that which also under such ungenial influences will wither away and lessen in extent—I mean the religion of God's elect people. We know that the false Christs and false prophets of the latter days, though they shall deceive many, shall not deceive the elect. We know it shall be again as it was aforetime, that when the prophets were killed and the altars of God digged down, He had yet reserved unto Himself out of the multitudes of Israel seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. And even so, at that time also, there will be a remnant according to the election of grace. Infidelity will never be able to stamp out religion, to destroy the holy seed. But it may destroy a nation's happiness and welfare. It may destroy the blessing which Christianity has brought into the world—the turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children. It may seriously injure us in our happiest relations, i.e. our domestic relations first, and then our social ones. It has done so already. The ungovernableness of children, the tampering with the marriage tie, are the results of a growing infidelity. Who did not foresee that when the ceremony of marriage was withdrawn from the searching testimony of God's Word, and deprived of the benediction of the Church,

other evils would follow speedily? Who is blind to the two consequences of that measure,—first, the alarming facilities for divorce, and the increasing use, or rather abuse, of them; secondly, the disposition to maintain that the man and the woman, so easily put asunder, shall be no longer regarded as one flesh in such a sense as that the sister of the wife shall be as his sister, but the wife dying, he shall be able to marry her as any other woman? Thus love, which has held families together in such a holy bond for generations, is insensibly diminished—first conjugal, then filial. For Satan has aimed at the root in marriage, being secure that then the branches shall wither too.

It is impossible to disconnect the disobedience of children from the dishonouring of marriage, and both from that growing tendency to infidelity in the heart of this nation; though still as a nation it is both loyal to its Sovereign, and obeys from the heart that form of government under which God has placed it.

But when I say that, let us call to mind the words which our great poet hath put into the mouth of one of our great historical characters at the period of the Reformation:—

“Had I but served my God with half the zeal  
I served my King, He would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies.”

Behold, my brethren, in the nation at large that very tendency of which the poet speaks—a tendency to forget the honour which is due to God, while it cheerfully pays that which is due to the earthly sovereign; a tendency—a beginning—a clinging, as we have said, to the forms which enshrine the power of kings, while those which enshrine the power of God unto our souls are undervalued. You cannot help seeing the tendency. Let me



put it in parallel words. You see the disposition of the people to obey from the heart that form of government which they have received to hold; you see on the part of a large majority of the people the indisposition to receive from the heart that form of doctrine which they have received to hold. Yes: which they have received to hold. I speak only of those who call themselves members of the Church of England, and who have received a form of doctrine, a form of sacred words, a form of worship, a rule of life to follow; and I say that in this worship, in that rule of life, according to this doctrine, they do not fear God in proportion as they honour the Queen.

I would not on any account damp by any words of mine your hearty rejoicing on Tuesday next. But I would have you hallow it in no ordinary manner with prayer. I would have you remember that the very word we use for a day of rejoicing means 'holy day,' i.e. a day dedicated to God.

If I were to tell you what the delight of my heart even now would be, it would be this—which some of you would say is a little far-fetched, a little beyond the mark; and so it is beyond the mark of our attainment, but is it beyond the mark of truth and what ought to be?—it would be this, that every congregation in this town (this town, of which it was once reported that there was family prayer in every house) should each address their own minister, and say,—‘We believe in Him who has taught us by His holy Apostle to make prayers and supplications and to give thanks for all men; on a day like Tuesday next, on the event and issue of which the welfare and prosperity of this nation doth so materially depend, under God, we would desire to assemble ourselves, every one in his own place of

worship, and to bow ourselves down before the Lord, to ask Him to bless our future King and Queen. We are not satisfied to do this by a delegacy; we would do it ourselves, upon our knees, in the place where in our ordinary worship God hath heard our prayers and performed our petitions hitherto. We doubt not He will hear us in this thing also.'

Brethren, I have no more love for mere forms than the most (so-called) independent thinker among you—than the very men who consider themselves to be of enlightened, large, and liberal views, their clergymen to be narrow-minded bigots. But I love a form that hath a spirit in it, and I would rather see every congregation in this town going forth to its own tabernacle, the rich and the poor together, the well-clad and the ill-clad side by side, than I would see what men call a highly-respectable and numerous congregation ascending up—though this too is right—with the chief magistrate, who is the Queen's representative, at their head, to the old parish church, where before the walls were too strait to hold them, their forefathers used to offer up their common and united prayers.





# Marriage.

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GENESIS ii. 18.

“AND THE LORD GOD SAID, IT IS NOT GOOD THAT THE MAN SHOULD BE ALONE; I WILL MAKE HIM AN HELP MEET FOR HIM.”

THIS is the first principle of marriage—society or companionship. The perfection of the creation was not complete, even when man was placed in a garden of delight, with everything necessary for sustentation and comfort, and that could please and gratify the senses; and that in unbroken and unblemished innocence. God looked upon the creature He had made, the crowning work of His hands, His own image, and declared one thing yet wanting—companionship. In this one respect the man whom He had formed in His own image and likeness fell short of the original, not only in regard of perfection, but in the mode of his being. For in the Godhead were a plurality of Persons, yet but one God. Man must in some measure, as far as might be, approach unto that joy of union in society which we attribute to the Godhead. Therefore the perfect and complete creation of man is described as containing this element of companionship or society, in those words, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them:” and “they twain were one flesh.”

Thus, then, marriage was ordained and instituted of God in paradise, as the relief of a natural necessity, the

necessity of companionship ; and was, as Bishop Jeremy Taylor expresses it in his beautiful Sermon on the Marriage Ring, “ The first blessing from the Lord, who gave to man not a friend, but a wife, that is, a wife and a friend too.”

But there was another design in this ordinance of marriage, and that is the increase and multiplication of this kind, as to every other species the means of increase were graciously provided. Therefore to the newly-created pair God said, carrying out and establishing this purpose of their creation, “ Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and have dominion over it,” you and your descendants. Thus, to use again the words of Bishop Taylor, “ Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities and churches, and Heaven itself. Celibate, i. e. the unmarried state, dwells alone. But marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house, and gathers sweetness from every flower, and labours, and unites into societies and republics, and sends out colonies, and feeds the world, and exercises many virtues, and promotes the interest of mankind, and is the excellence of our present state.” And here it is to be observed that God could doubtless have provided for the multiplication of our species without the ordinance of marriage, as we have received it. But “ wherefore did He make one?” as saith the Prophet Malachi: “ That He might seek a godly seed.” That He might establish families, houses of children, not to grow up at random, but under government, under one head, the man ; with whose authority, however, by this very institution of marriage, the sweetness and gentleness and tenderness of a mother was joined—the woman being seated with him in his throne for the tutelage, care, and instruction of their children, that

they might be trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The very words “an help meet for him” implies some such great design; that the woman should be an help to the man, not in the merest matter of carnal convenience, as among savages, where we see the decline and corruption of every institution, to carry his burdens and prepare his victuals, but an help unto the highest ends of his being, especially in the highest of all, which is to build up the Church, the Body of Christ, in Heaven. And when we speak of that Church as a kingdom, which it is; or a glorious city, as it shall hereafter be seen coming down from Heaven; we must remember that it is a family too, the household of the faithful, as the Apostle says in preferring Christ over Moses, that He is the Son over God’s house; “whose house are we,”—we all, who have been brought up in our families in the faith and fear of God, and in this blessed hope. For of both civil and spiritual societies the first root is a family, and of families the first root is marriage, and of marriage we see the root in God’s will expressed in the words of the text, “It is not good for man to be alone.”

But there is yet a third purpose and design of marriage, as expressed in our Marriage Service thus,—that “it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s Body.” This purpose took effect when evil came in after the Fall, as men multiplied upon the earth, and plainly justified the wisdom of God in ordaining it. It was to be the wholesome restraint set upon those desires and affections which might else have run to waste and carried ruin and confusion everywhere. When men, thinking to make that restraint yet stricter

and more severe, forbade to marry, they did but increase the evil they sought to remedy, overlooking the dignity and grace of this holy mystery ; forgetting that our Lord blessed the marriage feast at Cana by His presence, and consecrated it by a miracle. In fact, this error arose out of previous departure from the principle of the institution, as it is the nature of error and sin to beget the like. You see then, dear brethren, that of these three purposes designed to be fulfilled by marriage, the first, viz. society or companionship, constituted an heavenly and Godlike delight for man—perfect before the Fall, incomplete and maimed afterwards, as all good things are maimed and incomplete ; but yet, brethren, maimed and incomplete as it is, are there none who will bear me witness that the highest and most abiding satisfaction of their lives as they look back, hath been in the mutual society, help, and comfort they have had, as married persons, the one of the other, both in prosperity and adversity ? Yea, if that delight is still present with them, do they not value it, if they be godly and right-minded persons, above all the blessings they possess ? or if it has been taken from any, does not their heart bless the Lord who gave it, though in His wisdom He hath taken it away ? And is not this the comfort of the survivor, that He who died for him and her will bring them together again in His glory ?

The second purpose, increase or multiplication, extends that delight of which I have spoken, and prevents it from decaying or running to waste ; renews it perpetually, as the married will confess that they live their life over again in their children, and by a fainter but still perceptible process of satisfaction, in the children of others ; in having objects of love and charity, and help and benefit, and government and order around

them, and likewise for the reciprocation of benefits to themselves, as we learn lessons continually from those that are younger than ourselves, and admire their energy and borrow of their spirit, when our own would faint and fail.

But that third end and design of marriage is the destruction of evil and the antidote of the chiefest inlet to damnation — through lust — by this law, that every married person should, in addition to other duties undertaken when they enter into that state, “forsake all other, and keep only unto that one so long as they both shall live.” Against the infraction of that law the Lessons which are being read in the Services of the Church during this her penitential season are our sufficient warning, in which we see how God’s vengeance has ever overtaken those that presume to despise His holy commandment, how His favour has ever followed them that lived in holy obedience to the same.

I have spoken of the Divine ordinance of marriage and of the ends unto which it was ordained, because it is to a marriage that the thoughts of this nation are at this moment turning; and that not with the mere curiosity in some to gaze on a spectacle, or with the mere desire in others for a day of public festivity, but with an intensity, a loyalty, a fervour and a devotion, with a heartfelt joy and satisfaction, such as few of us can remember on any former occasion—not even, I may truly say, when twenty-three years ago the last royal marriage was celebrated.

But, my brethren, there is no doubt in my own mind that it is because of the blessing which attended that marriage; it is because in the union of her Majesty the Queen with one whom it has pleased God in His providence to take away from her side, this



whole nation beheld the exercise of all domestic virtues united with a strong conscientious sense of public duty ; it is because we hope to see the highest station in the land again adorned with the same virtues ; it is because a prince, who is one day to be our sovereign, hath chosen for his consort one of whom we have good reason to hope that she will walk in the steps of our beloved Queen, that the air rings this day with joyful acclamations, and many a pious heart has poured forth its prayer this morning for a blessing on the royal pair. It is this feeling which has solemnized men's minds for a religious service, as a prelude to a day of rejoicing. We are told to rejoice in the Lord alway, and it is because we do so rejoice, that we have come first to the sanctuary to seek God's blessing, to pray to Him that His grace may sanctify, His providence overrule, His love cement this marriage.

Have I said one word in which your hearts are not with my heart, brethren ? I believe not one. I believe in all I have said I am simply your mouthpiece, giving utterance to the feelings with which every heart is overflowing. And this is the joy of a preacher, to know that he addresses willing hearers, as of one that prays to hear the hearty "Amen" of a whole congregation, touched with a sense of the value and greatness of the things prayed for. Some of the older Fathers bear witness to the wonderful effect of the sound of this word uttered by an immense congregation, as expressing their consent in the petition. We are too much afraid of one another in these days, too rigid in our proprieties perhaps ; we shrink too much from the appearance of being very earnest in our petitions. How seldom, considering the vast importance of the things prayed for to each individual soul, do you see any one deeply affected, evidenc-



ing by any sign of this kind his hearty concurrence in any petition? And yet if men did not shrink so much from this, many persons would feel more than they do the greatness of the work we are engaged in, when we are making with one accord our common supplications before the Throne of Grace. But whether evidenced thus or no, I am sure, brethren, that there has gone up to-day from all here present, from many with great earnestness, a supplication, a prayer, an intercession for those whose names we bear on our hearts to-day, that God would grant them, according to the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus, every spiritual gift and blessing; that they may frame their lives in a holy obedience to His laws; that they may resist the temptations to which the highest equally with the lowest station is exposed continually; that they may live long together in godly love and unity, live to see their children Christianly and virtuously brought up; that they may be spared to reign in peace and joy over a happy, prosperous, united, and above all a religious people; that they may hold fast the truth of God and serve Him truly and faithfully; that they may be a help and comfort to our widowed Queen in those things where she hath lost so constant, so able, so true an helpmate; that they may so fulfil the high destinies to which God hath called them in this life, that in the world to come they may have life everlasting.

And what more shall I say? It is not good to multiply words beyond what is necessary to give utterance to the feelings of which we are full. But I think I might on such an occasion as this venture to say a few words in reference to our own state, being here also encouraged with the thought that I am expressing the sentiments of all here assembled. This is a day of rejoicing. The

prevailing feeling has been to make it purely so; to make it glad to all, even to those who taste not much the gladness of this world. This is very good, and becoming a Christian nation. I trust that neither here nor elsewhere there shall be anything which shall spoil our rejoicings; no unseemly conduct, no excess in meats or drinks, no giving way to evil tempers: if any jar or difference of opinion has arisen, that it will be forgotten from this moment; that at the end of the day we may not have to blame ourselves, nor have given occasion to any one else to blame us, for any want of courtesy in manner or kindness in feeling, for putting ourselves unduly forward, or evincing any want of consideration towards any one: so that there shall be nothing in the events of this day throughout the land to spoil or mar that subdued and restrained joy with which our widowed Queen must behold her eldest son, her heir and successor, settled in the same blessed estate which has been to her the source of purest affection and holiest joy, and hopes stretching forth beyond the grave, into the furthest depths of an everlasting future. "For though at the resurrection there shall be no relation of husband or wife, nor of brother or sister, nor parent or child, but all shall be swallowed up in the one glorious relation between the great family of the redeemed and Him who is their head; and as it hath been well said, 'No marriage shall be celebrated but the marriage of the Lamb;' yet through that sacramental union on earth do all holy married pairs pass to the spiritual and eternal, where love shall be their portion, and joy their crown, and the bosom of Christ their rest for ever and ever\*."

\* See conclusion of Bishop Taylor's Sermon on the Marriage Ring.













